THE CALL LETTER

The Call Letter is the official publication of KTSB-Student Radio at the University of Texas at Austin

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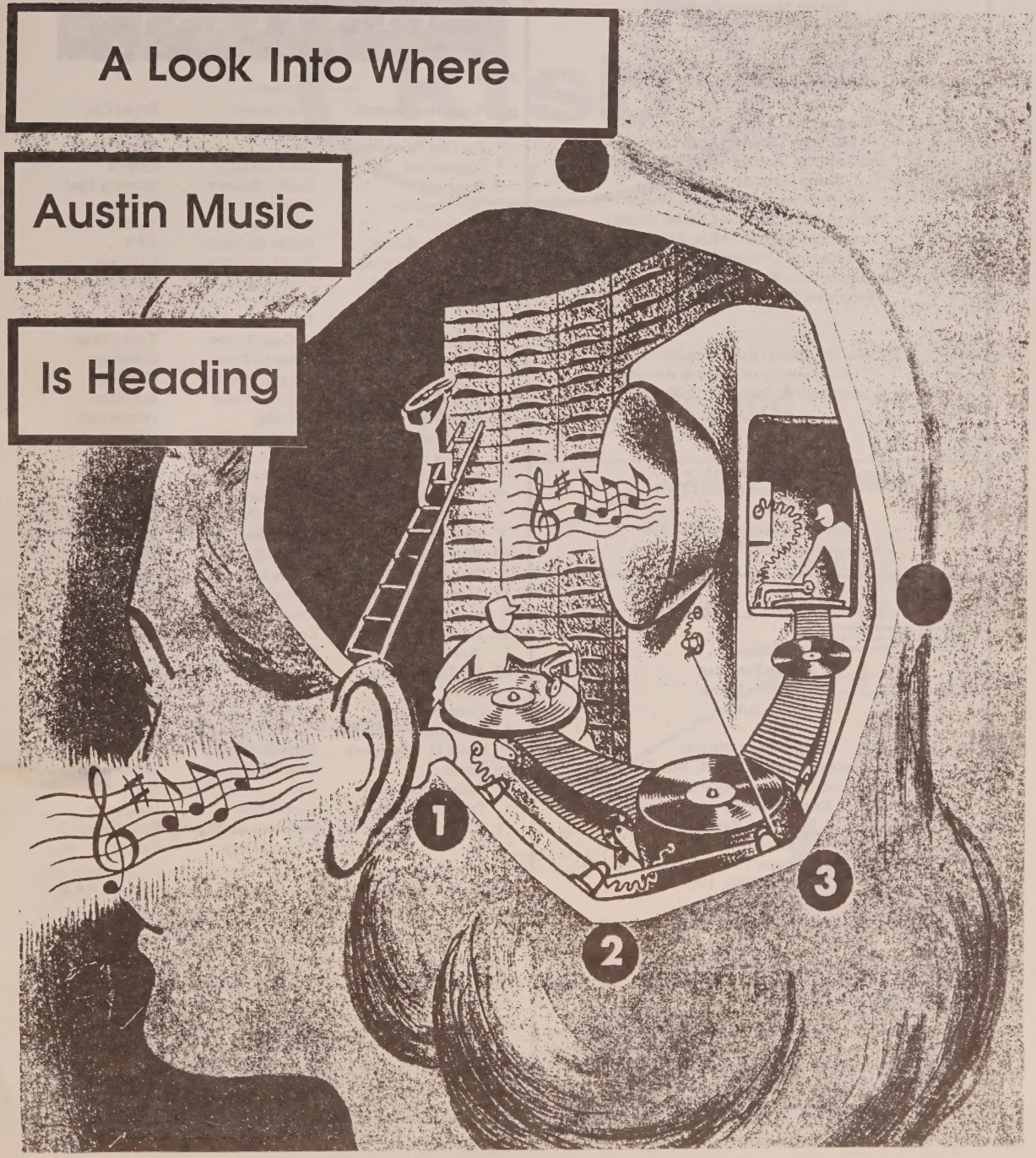
A Look Into Where Austin Music Is Heading



austin's alternative 91.7 cable fm

ktsb

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The Call Letter

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The Call Letter is published monthly by ktsb. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the station.

The Call Letter always welcomes any submissions in the form of editorials, art, reviews and comments. If you are interested in interviewing bands, local or national, please contact Greg Headley at the ktsb office. You can also get in touch with the editor at the same number, 471-5106.

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THE LATEST PLAYLIST

1.	Texas Instruments	*Sun Tunnels*	Rapid Cat
2.	Public Enemy	*It Takes A Nation*	Def Jam
*	Poi Dog Pondering	*EP*	Texas Hotel
*	Sugarcubes	*Life's Too Good*	Elektra
3.	Bongwater	*Double Bummer*	Shimmy Disc
4.	Joy Division	*Substance*	Factory
5.	Timbuk 3	*Eden Alley*	I.R.S.
6.	Eric B. & Rakim	*Follow the Leader*	UNI
*	Del Rubio Triplets	*3 Gals, 3 Guitars*	Cabazon
7.	Tracy Chapman	*Tracy Chapman*	Elektra
*	Iggy Pop	*Instinct*	A&M
8.	Pere Ubu	*The Tenement Years*	Enigma
*	Mekons	*So Good It Hurts*	Twin/Tone
*	House Of Love	*House Of Love*	Relativity
*	Stump	*A Fierce Pancake*	Chrysalis
*	Glass Eye	*Bent By Nature*	Bar None
*	Verlaines	*Bird Dog*	Homestead
*	Bad Mutha Goose	*Bad Mutha Goose*	Fable
9.	Jimmy Dale Gilmore	*Fair & Square*	Hightone
*	C. Van Beethoven	*Our Beloved Rev...*	Virgin
*	Catheads	*Submarine*	Restless
*	B.A.D.	*Tighten Up Vol. 88*	Columbia
*	KMFDM	*Don't Blow Your Top*	Wax Trax
10.	Run Westy Run	*Hardly Not Even*	SST
*	Patti Smith	*Dream Life*	Arista
11.	Happy Flowers	*I Crush Bozo*	Homestead
*	Vomit Launch	*Exiled Sandwich*	Rat Box
12.	Downbeat the Ruler	*Compilation*	Rounder
*	Area	*The Perfect Dream*	C'est La Mort
13.	My Dad is Dead	*Let's Skip the Details*	Restless
*	Pixies	*Surfer Rosa*	4AD/Rough
*	Colin Newman	*It Seems*	Restless
*	Wolfman Washington	*Out of the Dark*	Rounder
*	Sister D. Happiness	*Sister D. Happiness*	SST
*	James	*Strip Mine*	Touch'n Go
*	Ballad Shambles	*E.P.*	Skyclad
*	Fast n Bulbous	*Compilation*	Imaginary
14.	Click Click	*Rorschach Testing*	Pias
*	Die Kreuzen	*Century Days*	Taang!

These are currently the most played albums on ktsb. By the way, yours truly, Rob Forman, is no longer Music Director. The new Music Director is Laura Martz, a familiar name and face to all. You can get in touch with Laura every weekday from 1:00-2:00 p.m. in the afternoons at the station, except Wednesdays, when you can find her at night, 9:00-10:00 pm. (If you really need to get in touch with her, buzz her during her show, Wednesday 10:00-1:00 am.)

HOW TO GET

ktsb

AND CABLE RADIO

The Do-It-Yourself Method

KTSB is transmitting its signal through cable until it begins broadcasting on FM. When you get wired to cable radio, you will get KTSB, all other Austin radio stations, MTV, VH-1, and HBO and Cinemax in stereo. If you have Austin CableVision, you only need the following:

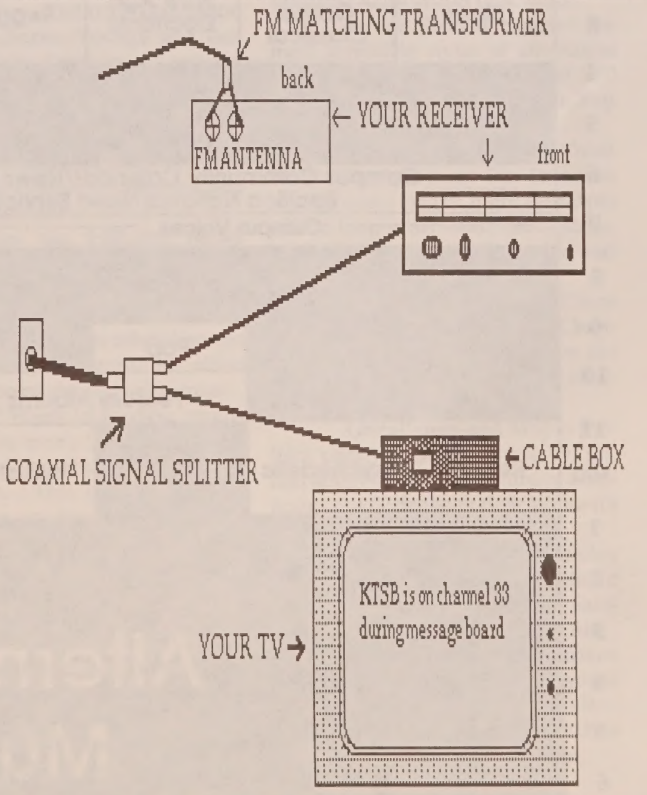
1. A signal splitter
2. An FM matching transformer
3. Two coaxial cables

You can get these at Wholesale Electronics, Radio Shack, etc.

Here's how to hook it up:

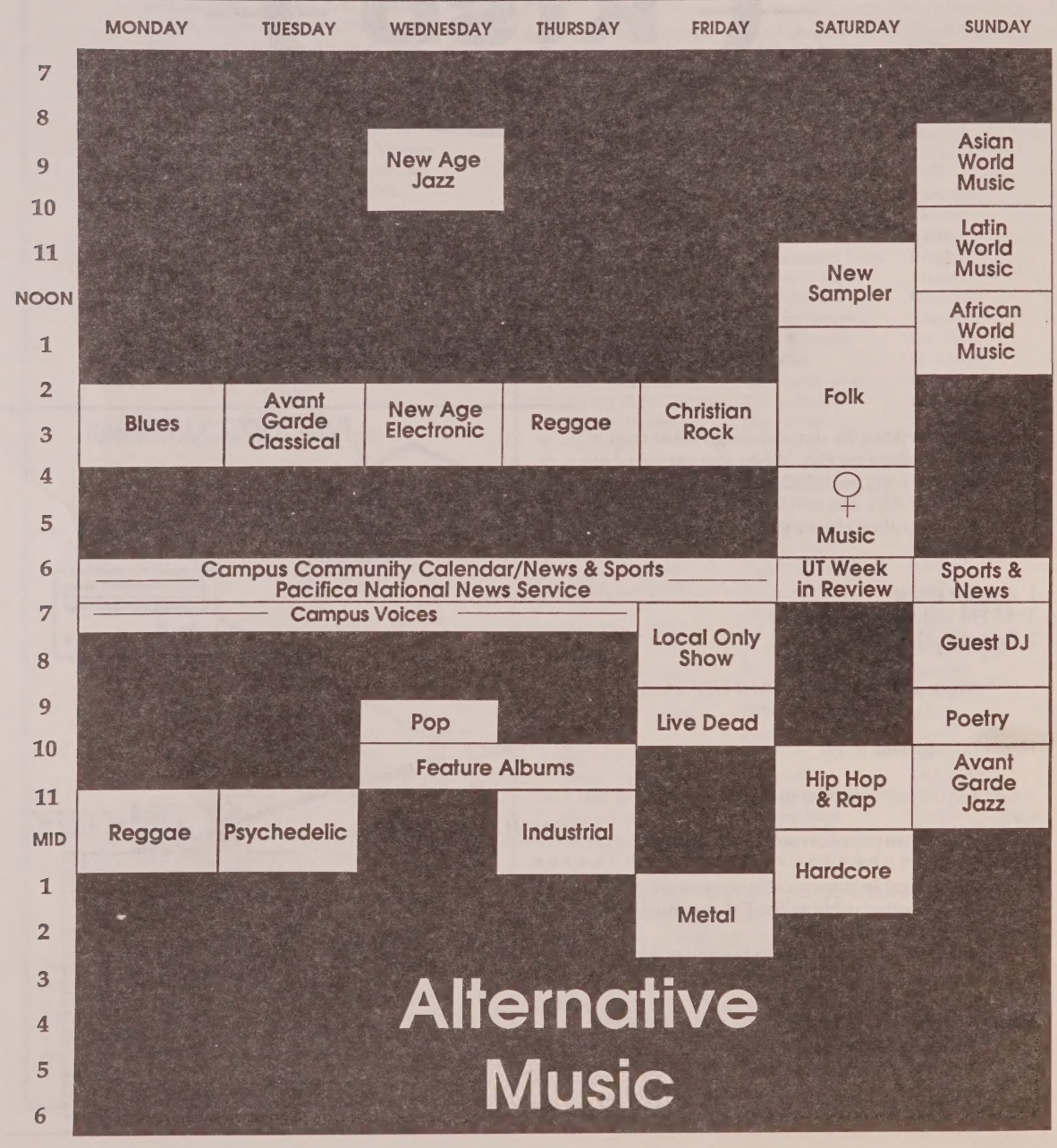
1. Connect the signal splitter to cable coming out of the wall.
2. Connect the two pieces of cable to the other end of the signal splitter.
3. Connect one cable to your cable box (for your TV).
4. Connect the other cable to the FM matching transformer.
5. Connect the FM transformer to the antenna jack on your receiver.

That's it! Now you can tune in 91.7 and enjoy KTSB Austin's Alternative
For more information, call us at 471-5106
Be sure to call Austin CableVision and let them know you have cable radio.



KTSB
PROGRAM SCHEDULE
FALL 1988

UT student radio - 91.7 cable fm



Ken McKenzie's Programming Buzz

So, how 'bout that Austin Music Festival? I sure enjoyed seeing our musical brethren and sistren stretch out across the huge stage at the Performing Arts Center, and I think a lot of you enjoyed the sight, too. (And at one point, the experience.) There were around thirteen hundred people through the hall that Friday night and that means we filled the floor. It was also satisfying to hear the sound of Laura's voice (as well as four other KTSB announcers) bouncing off the big bad balconies between acts... not too shabby, eh? Thanks go to Kristy Bartlett and Scott Kentros for organizing.

Speaking of our new (old) Music Director Laura Martz, everyone can keep current on new music if they watch for her listening parties (the first was held at the station) — you don't have to be a DJ or even a student radio volunteer to attend. Just show up. (But, maybe you should call first...)

Another way to check out a wide variety of new releases is to listen to Austin's Alternative on Saturday mornings at eleven. John Dennet premieres the **New Sampler Show** this month on KTSB and you vill like it. (Or ve vill torture you mith littel antique zigarettes durink ze new KTSB Mitnite News).

What we've tried to do with our programming schedule is to include specialty shows featuring types of music that seem to fall within the definition of being alternatives to commercial radio fare. Those genres not even given emphasis on other non-commercial stations in Austin can earn airtime on KTSB either by popular request (like "college" rock, folk, and metal artists), or by simply existing and continuing to be ignored (as are the world musics, "industrial," and hardcore rock). If you have cable TV and/or radio you've probably noticed how 24 hours a day our best DJs tend to dip into & out of each "specialty" type of music. Let me know what you think.

I think we haven't heard this kind of cutting edge artistic expression and solidarity since the days of Raul's on the Drag (or since KOKE FM, for that matter). Check out Rob Forman's article in this Call Letter issue for further proof. In udder werds, welcome back to a real Austin underground.

Here's a rundown of new additions to KTSB's program line-up for Fall '88

After Radio's Washington Bureau, Charles Youngs and our Public Affairs Department present several 30-minute "info-magazine" programs weekday evenings at 7:00 pm to be known as editions of **Campus Voices**, including The German Club, Asian Culture Committee, and Hillel Foundation.

After the 9:00 pm News Thursday nights and also Mondays at 7:00 pm join KTSB's **Movie Review program** for an entertaining look at each coming weekend on the screen, as well as a guide to video releases you might normally miss.

UT Week in Review rejoins the schedule every Saturday at 6:00 pm after the annual summer break in production. This one hour news magazine is produced by Broadcast Journalism students and has been on KUT for years.

Kim Moore's News Dept. presents a new program oriented toward **Issue & Debate** at 6:30 every Sunday during our daily news hour. Last spring the **Sports Spotlight** began at 6:00 pm, and Stephanie Druley's staff will now continue that tradition with 30 minutes of the popular interview show.

Musically, too, we have a few new specialty shows that fill out the weekly schedule. as Keith King and Scott Kentros keep introducing you to a wide variety of **Blues** every Monday from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the afternoons.

Tuesday afternoons will remind you of more than just a Moody Blues song once you hear Dale Scott's survey of **Avant-Garde Classical** composers at 2:00 pm every week. Thanks to the Fine Arts Library for this one...

Ken McKenzie's **New Age Electronic** joins the 2:00 pm specialty show line-up with a wide variety of uplifting musical and lyric ideas.

Jarrett Paschal exposes the most accessible styles of alternative rock every Wednesday night at 9:00 pm with an hour-long listen to **Pop** through the years.

Mike Wimer's **Live Dead Hour** features those San Francisco crazies every Friday night at 9:00 pm after a longer two-hour demo show, **Local Only**, with Alexis Arnold and Kevin Lewis.

Fridays at 2:00 pm Karen Loke and Lynn Miller bring **Christian Rock** to the Austin afternoon airwaves. This is a straight-ahead alternative to easy-listening stuff.

Greta James and Megan Pulliam present a wide variety by, for, and about women on Saturday afternoons at 4:00 pm with their **Women's Music Show**.

Finally, Hayes McCauley expands into **Latin World Music** when he alternates with Tom Salomon on Sundays from 10:00 am - Noon. If you listen to his **African Mix** from Noon 'til 2:00 pm you'll hear Ron Emoff now, too. He alternates Hayes at that time, and Chris Corsbie on **Asian Mix** at 8:00 am.

YES DEAR,

THERE REALLY IS...

I like Sixth Street.

There was a time—not very long ago, in fact—when I wouldn't have said that even if I'd had one too many. Even if I'd had *seven* too many.

A lot of people I know still shudder at the mere thought of getting near the street that has in the past been little more than a nightly meeting spot for Obnoxious Austinites United. The drunken snobs, the overcrowded sidewalks, the parking hassles, the tidal wave of cultural banality was enough to keep anyone with even the slightest regard for humane behavior or alternative lifestyles away from Sixth Street.

And, yes, much of that is still there. But these days, the good reasons to go to Sixth Street are plentiful enough to overshadow its drawbacks.

Probably the turning point was the opening of Club Cairo this summer at 306 E. Sixth, the former site of the Coyote Club and Alley Cat. Though Club Cairo has been around for only a couple of months, there's no question that it's now the home of Austin's new music scene—the successor to Big Mamou, which was the successor to Mark Pratz's Continental Club (not to be confused with the current club at the same location with the same name).

But Cairo is just the most recent development in a transformation that's been developing for a few years, mostly within a one- or two-block area on the western end of East Sixth. Walk across the street from Cairo and you're at the Black Cat Lounge, the ultimate hangin' out bar where the music is always the bottom line. Just around the corner on Trinity Street to the north is Chicago House, a cozy coffee house setting for accoustic performers and the occasional Mercado Caribe, the best place to go to hear the sounds of the outside world. All of these places are within a few steps of each other.

If you're into college radio-oriented rock, though—and a good many of you probably are, seeing as how you're reading a college radio publication right now—Club Cairo is the place to start.

Veteran scenesters insist there will always be new clubs to fill the gaps left when other clubs close, and that seems to have been true during the past year. The things that made Pratz's Continental so special—above all, the bands Pratz booked—were carried on by Big Mamou and now by Club Cairo. This is where you'll regularly find the most promising, up-and-comers of Austin's nationally recognized new music scene.

Seemingly sure-fire successes like Poi Dog Pondering, Grains of Faith and Ballad Shambles are there once or twice a month. More established acts like the True Believers and the Texas Instruments appear fairly frequently as well. And club owner Brad First keeps things from getting too one-tracked by throwing in a RapFest here and an Art X-Po there.

Still, there are a couple of areas for improvement. One is touring bands. There have been a few, and usually good—New Jersey's Wooden Soldiers, for example. And there's the occasional band from Dallas or Houston (Potatoes, So Wat, Modern Whigs). But why hasn't anyone been able to draw some of the top college bands to a smaller club like Pratz used to? With Liberty Lunch booking fewer and fewer shows these days, someone should be able to fill the gap, and Cairo would be the most logical place for a lot of not-yet-big college bands to play.

Also, the apparent loss of Hoot Night is lamentable. The easy-going atmosphere of these accoustic-oriented Tuesday nights at Continental and Big Mamou often resulted in some special performances. Maybe Hell Nite and Club Funk (which trade off Tuesdays at Club Cairo) are attracting a crowd of their own—I don't know for sure since I haven't been attending them—but it seems like there should be room for Hoot Night in there somewhere.

OK, enough about Club Cairo—as I mentioned before, it's only one of the reasons Sixth Street is looking up these days. Most people already know about the Black Cat since it has held its ground for three or four years now, but if it's still foreign territory to you, then you've really missed something. The club features some of the town's best musicians nearly every night, and it brings out the rawest, most basic musical intuition in them. If you're looking for spontaneous, inspired jam sessions, this is the place to be.

I can't say much about Chicago House and Mercado Caribe because I haven't seen bands there yet. But taking a look at each club's monthly schedule provides enough information to realize that these two places are worth visiting.

Mercado Caribe specializes in reggae. Local bands such as I-Tex and Ras Iginga & Tropical Vibes appear frequently, while Spy Vs. Spy (a spinoff group from the Killer Bees) recently made its first Austin appear-

ACTUAL MUSIC ON 6TH ST.

By Peter Blackstock

ance there. The club also has been importing some of Dallas' best reggae acts, including Ten Hands and Leroy Shakespeare & the Rebels, and showcases Latin American-flavored music occasionally as well with bands such as Quizumba. An open mike night on Tuesdays provides the opportunity for any style of music to find its way into the club.

Chicago House seems to have a cast of regular singer/songwriters—among them are Jimmy LaFave, Jim Heald, Will T. Massey, Mark Luke Daniels, Emily Kaitz—most of whom you probably haven't heard much of unless you already go there often. I was a bit skeptical myself, having seen Daniels once before without being terribly impressed. But after hearing LaFave's new tape recently, I'm convinced that I've been missing out on some good stuff.

And there are other spots worth hitting a little farther down the street. Raven's, just around the corner to the north on Red River, is one of the best country/western joints in town, featuring bands that appeal to more than just the traditional country music fan. Somehow, this club has been able to keep Tony Perez's weekly shows tucked underneath its stetson hat, even though the major labels already have discovered how much potential this guy has. How many clubs in town feature a Warner Bros. recording artist every Wednesday, for no cover? Occasional road shows feature some of the best regional acts as well.

Steamboat, just a block east of the Black Cat, also books some bands worth checking out once in a while, although overpriced beer and a ridiculous new wall mural of typically '70s-looking rockers make it not the greatest place to hang out. Still, the club has shown a willingness to book much more interesting bands than most Sixth Street venues, particularly on its new band-oriented Triple Ticket Tuesdays.

Some parts of Sixth Street, of course, remain as they have been for most of the decade. Those human jukeboxes known as cover bands, and the clubs that house them, will probably be abundant as long as there are enough people to support them who don't care about creativity and originality in music, or who see music as nothing more than nostalgia. The trendy disco dance clubs have their own dedicated following as well, and those who prefer to sacrifice common sense for fashion will make their way to Sixth for places like Curfew and Arena.

But for the first time in my memory, people who care about music first and foremost have a stake in Sixth Street that's just as prominent as any of these other groups. And that's encouraging.

It's Wednesday night, the last night of August, KTSB is having a benefit at Club Cairo, and it's pretty obvious that most of the students are back; the place is as crowded as it has been in its brief existence. Hoi Polloi, a relatively new band, opens with one of the best sets yet, and Hundredth Monkey keeps the crowd going with a set full of great melodies. (Sure, both bands sound a good bit like "Austin bands"—but, all things considered, that's a pretty good sound to have.)

Take a break between sets, wander across the street to the Black Cat. Who's that rippin' guitarist in the shades and the goatee who looks like that dude in Los Lobos? Turns out he *is* that dude in Los Lobos. No big surprise at the Black Cat—and, more importantly, no big deal either. At the Black Cat, it's just more good music.

Back to Cairo, where it's still packed. Wasn't Poi Dog Pondering that band from Hawaii that used to play on the Drag? Now they're packing 'em in on Sixth Street as they gear up for a national tour with Camper Van Beethoven. The more things stay the same, the more they change. Never thought I'd have this much fun on Sixth Street.

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Austin's Affair with Experimental Music

By Rob Forman

It is hard to imagine, but if a year ago someone had said that Austin would have an industrial scene in late '88, you could have accused them of hallucinating. Well, now that they've "come down", Voila!

Since, there have been experimental groups around for awhile (from the Surfers to Miracle Room to Liquid Mice) but it's not until this year that an actual scene has coalesced to have a real impact on Austin music. It seems like a couple of years ago one would say, "I know there's gotta be people out there doing this stuff in their closets, but. . ." As it goes, there was no place or way to network. This year that's changed.

One of the more evident reasons for this has been the three experimental music affairs that have taken place. The first at Paperback Plus in March and the most recent at Mexic-Arte on September 2nd. The shows have introduced many performers from music to film to performance art and so on, and actually they have been more fun and less esoteric than one would expect.

The most recent show being a true success in every sense— focused performances, good audience turnout and response, and a great location (Mexic-Arte is a beautiful space.) The show included Triangle Mallet Apron: whose performance was a dynamic display of homemade instruments used for very active pieces. (A live recording of their performance at the second music affair is available at Paperback Plus and is brilliant.) Liquid Mice: veterans of the avant-garde in Austin who have had a low profile and unambitious approach. Nevertheless, their shows involve live playing of *real* instruments that sometimes blend into hyponotic soundscapes, or cut loose into intense free form jams. And Seemen: who have organized these shows; put out an excellent tape, "Woozy"; have sold t-shirts and by far are the most ambitious of the "scene." They have created a real name for themselved in less than two years, and deservedly so. Their performance at the 3rd Music Affair was much more cohesive than previous performances using slides, video collage and organic sound sculpture that was quite impressive.

If that's enough (and that's not for Austin!) the release of the "Polyp Explodes" cassette compilation for Deadline Productions also has helped to expose Austin's more innovative bands including Mudhoney, Seemen, Miracle Room, Ed Hall, ST 37 and Thanatopsis Throne, showing the diversity of the scene itself.

Just as important as these groups (as well as Box Car Children, Pocket Fishrman, Dogfish, Softee Gotee Testee, Drug Zombies and many others) was the fact that they actually had a place to play. Unfortunately the "A" Club at Paperback Plus was forced to close before it really got started. But for the summer it was at least a place to play for a lot of bands that have trouble getting gigs.

The rise of a couple of new fanzimes such as Skin & Bones and Bad News Bingo, as well as the already established Fatalist and N/D, helped in covering and contributing with live reviews, cassette reviews and interviews of these performers that weren't getting in print elsewhere.

And to top it all off, even radio has done its share as well— namely with two shows on KTSB. "Amalgamation Decimation", the industrial show on Thursdays at 11:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m., has played as much local avant-garde music as it can get its hands on (hint, hint) as well as industrial from all over the world. And the "Nic and Edmund Experience", immediately following the industrial show, has had Seemen perform live twice as well as doing zany sound collage with an "everything goes" attitude.

For the most part, Austin's progressive music has been pretty stale this year but the wealth of new, more aggressive and experimental groups, as well as the factors to support them (print, radio, clubs and people!) show that everyone is getting tired of the "old sincerity" and want something different.

One can only hope that more and more people will get involved with what is happening to keep it alive and going because just paying the cover to get in is only part of the situation. It is vital that these groups have a place to play — Mexic-Arte, Pato's Tacos and even Club Cairo are doing some creative booking, but there is not a financially established base that other kinds of music have to support themselves—it takes direct involvement from you.

Note: The ever busy Seemen are hoping to get some national exposure for these artists by putting together a cassette compilation that will be carried by Subterranean Records in California. If you make music of this nature, send it to:

Flying Squirrel Productions
3413 West Avenue
Austin, TX 78705

Get Involved with KTSB

We need your time and talents to make this station go. We can tell you about all the departments at ktsb and the positions available. You can help in lots of places—around the office, distributing information, personnel management and much more. We'll work around your schedule and provide training if you need it. Get involved with the hottest team on the UT campus and around Austin!

For more information contact:
Lester Polchlopek
Volunteer Coordinator
His office hours are
Monday-Friday
10:00-11:00 a.m.
or you can call
471-5106
to leave a message
or set up an appointment.

October Feature Albums

October 6
Zeitgeist
Translate Slowly

October 13
Mott the Hoople
Mott

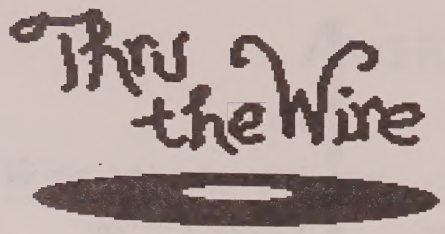
October 20
X
Under the Big Black Sun

October 27
Nick Drake
Five Leaves Left

Trust

I looked into the eyes of those
I passed on the streets
And I could see their fear
And I could feel their loneliness
And hear it
And smell it
With all my being
And I became afraid
Began running,
Looking up,
Avoiding eyes
For fear that someone would see
That I knew
And feel me.
At night I would go home and
Shut the door to my room;
During the day I would walk...
Looking for something
Children in trees watching me with
Knowing eyes.
I realize all this because lately
I've been gazing at the sun,
Unafraid to look in the
Very center.

Kristy Bartlett



HEAVENLY BODIES — by Kyle James
Celestial
(Third Mind/C'est la Mort)

This burgeoning label from Louisiana seems to be riding the small but growing wave of interest in a genre of music that is hard to classify. Some call it ethereal, some have tagged it hyper-art rock, and some, for lack of a better term, have named for the label it's most associated with, that is, 4AD-ish music. With the coinciding release of the new album by AREA and the compilation *Dr. Death's Volume II, les péchés de l'amant*, C'est la Mort has begun to explore a relatively unchartered area, in America at least. The audience appears to be growing.

With *Celestial*, Heavenly Bodies endeavor, as both names imply, to evoke certain emotive responses in the listener. Through their use of orchestral and ambient synth programs, sampled choral backdrops and hypnotic percussive rhythms, they are largely successful. The two core musicians, James Pinker and Scott Rodgers, were reportedly early members of 4AD's Dead Can Dance. And although I can't find any vinyl by DCD with their names, the influence of DCD heard in their music is enough to dispell any doubts. Caroline Seaman handles vocals here, and there is more than a passing resemblance between her style and that of Lisa Gerard of DCD fame. Caroline even contributed to the This Mortal Coil project, *Filigree and Shadow*. She fits the vein, you know, the haunting, mostly unintelligible, melodic vocal line that funtions more like another instrument than a conveyor of lyrical meaning.

Several of the tracks are quite good. The intro starts off with harp and string sounds with an underlying drum track. This introduces the album, and group, nicely. The plaintitive sax and clarinet on "An Obsession" sound good as precedents for the grandiose synthetic barrage that follows, approaching the sublime. "Cavatina," with acoustic guitar and spare piano underlying swelling chord phrases is the most ambient of the bunch, and one of the most effective. The other cuts sound nice too, from hypnotic African drum patterns to Indian chanting voices. The band has made an effort that deserves praise.

Still, despite the backgrounds of the artists, the instrumentation, vocal abilities, etc., there is something missing. For some reason the album lacks real feeling. It doesn't really completely draw you in or knock you off your feet like some other works in this genre. I don't mean to make comparisons, but obviously the group is going after the heart in this one, so to speak. And they almost reach it, but not quite. There is great potential in this band. They play their instruments well and know how to write, the album certainly attests to that. It's just that last hurdle that needs to be overcome that makes Heavenly Bodies a good group, instead of a great one.

METALLICA — by Ray Seggern
"...And Justice For All"
(Elektra)

After two years of anticipation, Metallica's fourth full-length album, *...And Justice For All* has finally been released and, in a nutshell, it stomps. The most eagerly awaited thrash album of all time, it is destined for platinum status, even in absence of video and widespread radio support.

I use the word "thrash" reluctantly, for it connotates the image of power chords mindlessly played at 100 mph. This really doesn't do justice (no pun intended) to the whole gamut of emotions conveyed on this album (or by Metallica in general).

Now don't get me wrong, "Justice" definitely retains the balls-out, in-your-face timbre that has become Metallica's trademark. The crushing rhythm, odd-time signatures and eerie guitar harmonies on "Blackened," the album's opener, prove this point.

Metallica's real growth as a band, however, is demonstrated on songs like "One" and "Harvester of Sorrow," where subtlety and intensity combine to take the music to new heights.

Lyrically, the songs all adhere to the themes of independence, liberty and freedom of thought. It is a concept album—but not like *The Wall* or *Quadrophenia* , which are stories with central characters. Here, the songs are related conceptually, but vary topically from one another. The lyrics are intelligent and thought-provoking. But taking into account the genius demonstrated on past albums by vocalist James Hetfield, this is not surprising.

So while many bands rehash what Metallica have done, they continue to expand and redefine the parameters of the genre they pioneered. As local Metallicologist Corey Mitchell puts it, "Justice" is further evidence of their no-holds-barred, no compromise attitude. Metallica have never been a band to worry about managerial or commercial standards."

But remember, Metallica are an acquired taste; not like sauerkraut, but say, gin and tonic. They are a little hard to get used to, but beyond that, intoxicating and extremely habit-forming.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

THE DEL RUBIO TRIPLETS — by Jay P. Robillard
Three Gals, Three Guitars
(Cabazon)

Actually, the title of this album is a little too short. It should also read. . .No Talent. But before you skip on to something else you should know that is is precisely that third element which works wonders for this record. Of course, if they were to actually put that on the sleeve, the charm would be gone. The mystery of whether or not these "song stylists" realize how awful they are would be solved. I searched the cover long and hard to find some disclaimer, a clue, anything that would give me some idea on how the people who released it really felt about it. But instead I only saw evidence that they have taken their performing seriously since the early '50s at least. (There are no dates on the cover or any inside the inner sleeve notes. So I am going by hairdos.)

From looking at the Japanese and Arabic print on their publicity photos on the cover, they seem to have been quite an attraction overseas early in their careers. With an album out like this (all the cuts recorded in 1988) it makes me think they were exiled from performing in the states. Presently, they are the #1 attraction of the retirement home circuit in California.

The Del Rubios have concocted some cock-eyed formula that combines cackling vocals, scrambled accoustic guitar strumming and sharp, popping percussion to produce a gradually worsening headache. Everything is off time. It makes Hasil Adkins sound like a metronome. What makes the album interesting though, is the way they apply this formula to such a wide variety of familiar songs (the album is all covers) such as "Walk Like An Egyptian," "Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead," and "Hey Jude." You know how the songs are supposed to sound, but it's funny to hear the Triplets stumble through their interpretations.

Well, it's funny at first, but after a few songs your silly grin gives way to a sagging brow. Just before you lose vision you develop a cramp there and decide enough is enough. I don't think I'll ever be able to listen to this one all the way through in one sitting or even in one day. I have resigned myself to pacing the auditious of *Three Gals, Three Guitars* to three, maybe four, songs at a time. It really gets under my skin whether I'm attentively listening to it or just letting it play as background noise.

And these gals look ridiculous! Really. When three women in their early 50s (at least) sport mini skirts and go-go boots on their front cover they're asking for humiliation. They just don't wear it well.

Albums like this don't come around often. Usually you have to wait a few years for a record to be dated enough to sound this horribly good as is the case with Vanilla Fudge's *In The Beginning* or most disco records. The Del Rubios' performance on this album is bad today and will always be bad.

Maybe the last laugh's on us. But only a handful of people have made a horrible record that is truly entertaining. The performance has to be personal, sincere and naive to any performing standards. The Del Rubio Triplets fit this odd category perfectly.

(Note: If you like this album you'll love *Philosophy of the World* by The Shaggs and the *Golden Throat* compilation featuring songs sung by William Shatner, Mae West, Leonard Nimoy and many others. Crank 'em up!)

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THE CATHEADS **By Michele Houston**
Submarine
(Restless)

California has always produced good bands and the Catheads are no exception. Restless released their album *Submarine* in June and around here it's getting a lot of air play.

The cover of *Submarine* quotes Moe Tucker of Jet Lag who says, "the Catheads can sound like bluesy, woozy Stones or Lennon in his Cold Turkey days. . .Yet they can also be sweet, with every note in place." The quote describes the album perfectly.

The band definitely have their own style but they manage to explore every sound from screaming, head banging rock as with "Little Less of Me," to the cheesy rhymes and whistling that characterie Grass, to the bluesy "Postcard." The second side of the album is more pop in style and is upbeat and danceable. Possibly influenced by the Pogues and R.E.M.

The Catheads are Melanie Clarin, Alan Korn, Mark Zanandrea and Sam Babbert. All four sing and play a variety of instruments that add a unique flavor to the album. And with their really long hair, they possess the "hard rock" look that can be established with "Little Less of Me" and "Hallelujah Dance." Although the latter is speed rock, it is personalized with heavy harmonica, courtesy of Melanie. And "Crash Landing" shows their other side of musical taste with an '80s psychedelic rock feeling to it.

Without a doubt, the Catheads and their album are worth the money.

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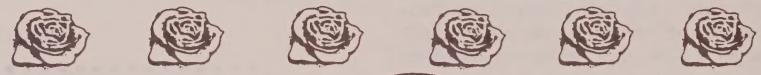

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